

HA-1753

Holland-Bull House

Ca. 1870; ca. 1885

Bel Air, Maryland

Private

The Holland-Bull House is a two-story frame house built as a tenant house in a much smaller form about 1870 and enlarged to its present appearance and size about 1885. The two-story bay window on the west elevation was added in the early 20th century. This may be one of the earliest houses in the town with a center hall plan and the three-bay, center gable facade which was the most common house type in Bel Air in the late 19th century. Most of this type have a side hall and entrance. The interior has been altered recently for use as offices, but retains two original staircases and wide board flooring on the second floor.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Holland-Bull House (preferred)

and/or common J. Edmund Bull House

2. Location

street & number 608 Moores Mill Road ☐ not for publication

city, town Bel Air ☐ vicinity of congressional district Second

state Maryland county Harford

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Mervyn G. and Gloria R. Thompson
Charles V. and Adalene A. Spalding

street & number 54-A Main Street telephone no.:

city, town Bel Air state and zip code Maryland 21014

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Harford County Court House liber GRG 745

street & number Courtland Street folio 310

city, town Bel Air state MD 21014

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. HA-1753

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

Check one

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Holland-Bull House is a two-story frame house probably built as a tenant dwelling about 1870 with a single pile plan on the north side of Moores Mill Road just east of Hickory Avenue (U.S. Route 1) in Bel Air, Maryland. The house was expanded to its current three-bay, center gable appearance and an ell added in about the mid-1880's. The two-story bay on the west elevation was probably added in the early 20th century. Anchor slots on the main south elevation indicate the house once had a one-story porch which is now gone. The six-over-one windows in the main section and the arched six-over-one attic window in the central gable may indicate an early 20th century alteration, while the six-over-six windows in the east side of the ell were probably part of the 1880's alteration. The stone foundation and slate roof are typical materials in use in Harford County in the late 19th century, as is the novelty siding. The interior end chimney on the west gable end indicates the later addition of the bay because the chimney does not exist on the first and second floor interiors. The interior plan shows the random addition of rooms over time, but the building sequence is difficult to trace because it has recently been converted to commercial use and the interior walls have been resurfaced or new walls built. The principal features still intact are the main staircase rising directly opposite the front door, ending in a second floor landing with access to the two upper rooms of the main section and the second story of the ell, and the rear staircase, winding up from the northwest corner of the former dining room in the ell. A small barn with a slate roof and board and batten siding and a shed addition on the west stands directly north of the house.

See Continuation Sheets for General
Description

8. Significance

Survey No. HA-1753

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1870; ca. 1885 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Holland-Bull House is a good example of the most popular house type in Bel Air in the late 19th century, with its exterior integrity virtually intact except for a removed front porch. The house is one of the earliest of the three-bay, center-gable form to have a center entrance and hall, there being only one other known late 19th century house with this feature. The Holland-Bull House was a much smaller house built originally as a farm tenant house and its alteration and enlargement to equal in exterior appearance and size the most common house type in Bel Air obscure its formerly rural location and function.

See Continuation Sheets for Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data and Historic Context.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. HA-1753

Land Records of Harford County

Larew, Marilyn. Bel Air: The Town Through Its Buildings. Edgewood, MD.: The Town of Bel Air and The Maryland Historical Trust, 1980.Portrait and Biographical Record of Harford and Cecil Counties, Maryland. New York:

Chapman Publishing Co., 1897.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3Quadrangle name Bel Air, MarylandQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting NorthingB

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Zone Easting NorthingC

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary is as marked on the attached site plan sketch, congruent with the existing lot as contracted for by Esquire Real Estate Co., March 1988.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet L. Davis, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization

date May 1989

street & number 5632-C Loch Raven Blvd.

telephone (301) 323-3852

city or town Baltimore

state MD 21239

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

CONTINUATION SHEET

Holland-Bull House
Bel Air, Maryland

Section 7, Page 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Holland-Bull House is located on a cleared site with a narrow, open strip of lawn separating it from the right-of-way of Moores Mill Road. Its main elevation faces south and has three bays and a central gable with an arched attic window. The entrance is in the center bay and is severely plain, with no surround. A panel door with a glazed upper section is probably an early 20th century replacement of the original door. The first story windows are paired six-over-one. The upper story windows are single and also have six-over-one sash. Even the arched attic window has six-over-one. The door currently has only a wood double step platform before it, and square depressions in the novelty siding near the edges of the elevation indicate a porch once shaded the first story.

The west elevation is dominated by a two-story bay set on a brick foundation, indicating it was a later addition. It has both six-over-one and four-over-one sash. The gable eaves above the bay extend slightly and reveal rafter ends. The interior end chimney is present only as a vestige of the full stack which is now gone in the first and second stories. The east elevation of the main section has two bays with six-over-one windows. Extending north from the northwest corner of the main section is a two-story ell with six-over-one sash in its west side and six-over-six in its east elevation. A rear entry is located on the east side of the ell and a shed covering the cellar entrance fills in the angle between the main section and ell. The roof of the entire house is slate.

The interior plan shows the possible sequence of development from a one-room, side-entry house to its present plan. The stair case is directly in front of the entrance. Its sides are enclosed and on both sides of it are rooms probably used as parlors when the house was a residence. The room in the west end was the original house. Where the fireplace once was located is now the bay window. Behind this room is a second room, recently used as a dining room and now a meeting room. A built-in buffet in the room apparently encloses a chimney flue, as the exterior shows a second small chimney in this location. This may be an indication that the original use was as the kitchen. In the northwest corner is a winding staircase to the second story of the ell. Located in the northeast corner of the first floor is the present kitchen and a short hallway to the rear door. A cellar entrance is under the rear staircase.

The main staircase rises straight from the entrance to a landing at the former rear wall of the main section. From this landing, the two rooms above the first floor of the main section are located to the east and west and a third arched doorway leads into the upper story of the ell. The major features of historical importance on the upper level are the original wood floors and a tongue-and-groove closet door in one of the rooms. As all of the rooms are now offices, the character of a residence is present only in the apparently random arrangement of spaces. Woodwork throughout the house is plain. Except on the second floor, wall-to-wall carpets and tile cover the existing wood floors.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 7-2

CONTINUATION SHEET

HA-1753

Holland-Bull House
Bel Air, Maryland

Section 7, Page 2

The barn appears to have been built later than the original section, perhaps as a part of the major alterations in the 1880's. No other outbuildings are present and the lot containing the house and barn had been greatly overgrown by trees and shrubs until very recently, leaving no evidence of fields, gardens, or pastures associated with the house.

CONTINUATION SHEET

HA-1753

Holland-Bill House
Bel Air, Maryland

Section 8, Page 1

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period:

Industrial/Urban Dominance, A.D. 1870 - 1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Themes:

Architecture/Landscape Architecture/Community Planning

Resource Type:

Category: Building(s)

Historic Environment: Rural

Historic Function(s) or Use(s):

Domestic/Single dwelling/Residence
Domestic/Secondary structure/Barn

Known Design Source: None

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 8-2

CONTINUATION SHEET

Holland-Bull House
Bel Air, Maryland

Section 8, Page 2

HISTORIC SETTING

Harford County was created in 1773 from Baltimore County to ease the problems of government in a large agricultural region where travel was often difficult. The county seat was at first designated at Bush on the turnpike route between Baltimore and Philadelphia, but in 1782 it was moved to Scott's Old Fields, a site more centrally located to make it further convenient to the northern part of the new county. Scott's Old Fields became the town of Bel Air and was laid out as a long street of lots on either side of the road from Rocks to the turnpike junction at Bush. The new county seat developed very slowly until the mid-19th century when it experienced a decline in population, perhaps inevitable given that there were no industries and, until 1883, no railroad connection with larger cities.¹

Surrounding the town were farms and homesteads consisting of houses, barns, and outbuildings. Some farms were large enough to employ tenant labor, thus necessitating small dwellings nearby the fields with access to market roads. The holdings of Robert W. Holland, who died shortly after the end of the Civil War, were expanded by his sons Robert and Elijah and by 1868 included the property on which the Holland-Bull House was built as a tenant farm house on a 20-acre tract. Although its exact date of construction is obscure because of its relative unimportance, by 1905, the expanded house and a 10-acre lot was sold by Robert Holland to Charles A. Bull as a respectable residence. The proximity of the town overcame the house's humble origins and the value of its location came to be appreciated in the early 20th century as Bel Air began to expand its boundaries. The area including the Holland-Bull House was annexed by Bel Air in the 1980's.

RESOURCE HISTORY

The Holland-Bull House was built about 1870 as a one-room, possibly two-story tenant house on the Robert W. and Elijah Holland property. The Holland brothers has inherited about 243 acres from their father, Robert W. Holland, who died between August 1865 and June 1866. In 1868, the brothers purchased an additional 20 acres from Benjamin P. Moore, part of the tract "Major's Choice", which may have included the land on which the tenant house was built. Elijah died intestate in 1877, leaving Robert as his executor and the guardian of his three children.

The 1878 Martenet map of Harford County shows that Robert W. Holland's residence was further north on the west side of the present U.S. Route 1 on the road to Hickory from Bel Air. The tenant house is not shown, indicating its

¹ Larew, Marilynn. Bel Air: The Town Through Its Buildings. Edgewood, Md.: The Town of Bel Air and The Maryland Historical Trust, 1980, p. 39.

Holland-Bull House
Bel Air, Maryland

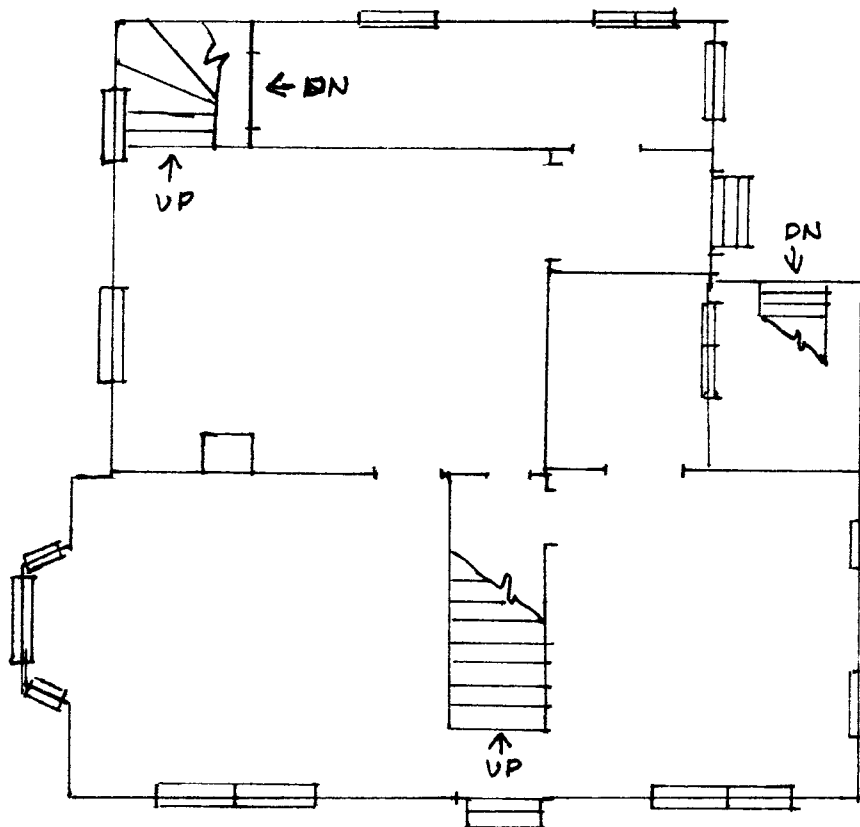
Section 8, Page 3

relative unimportance. During the 1880's, the tenant house was expanded, with additional rooms and an ell built on the existing structure, as the present exterior took shape. The reason for the expansion is unknown, but may have been related to a change in its use or relationship to the larger Holland property. In 1905, Robert Holland purchased the interests of his brother's children in the estate and sold it in smaller portions, one of which was a 10-acre tract including the tenant house, which was purchased by Charles A. Bull, the son of Jacob E. Bull, the builder of some of Bel Air's finest late 19th century houses. Charles Bull worked with his father in his contracting business.² Bull probably added the two-story bay, a common feature in the houses built by the Bull contractors. The house remained in the Bull family until 1967 when it was sold as an investment property by J. Edmund Bull to Mervyn Thompson and Charles Spalding. In 1987-88, it was renovated as the offices of Esquire Real Estate Company and Reuwer Associates.

RESOURCE ANALYSIS

The Holland-Bull House represents the architecture theme in Harford County during the period of Industrial/Urban Dominance (1870 - 1930 A.D.) as an example of an early, functional dwelling in a rural location which was expanded to the size and appearance of nearby houses in the town of Bel Air during the 1880's, a period of intensified building activity and refinement of architectural taste in the town. The house as altered is a good example of the most common house type in Bel Air, which consists of two stories, three bays, a center gable, rear ell, and a two-story bay window. The only feature missing in the Holland-Bull House is the one-story porch. The Dr. Benjamin Smith House (HA-1457) is one of several similar examples of the type and suggests the effect of the Holland-Bull House facade with the porch in place. The Holland-Bull House may be one of the earliest examples of a center-hall plan within the type, as the other surviving houses with this feature date from the early 20th century. Others are the Hollis-Lee House (HA-1420), built about 1903, and the Esley House (HA-227), built 1909-1910. The only known 19th century house with this feature is the Smallsbeck-Jones-Brix House (HA-1363), built in 1877. Because the Holland-Bull House exterior is virtually intact except for its missing porch, it ranks equally in significance to these Inventory sites. The factor which sets it apart is its formerly rural location; the alterations were calculated to give the house an appearance and spaciousness like its urban neighbors, foretelling its eventual annexation as Bel Air expanded its town limits.

² Portrait and Biographical Record of Harford and Cecil Counties, Maryland.
New York: Chapman Publishing Co., 1897, p. 152.



Not to Scale

May 1989
Janet L. Davis

Holland-Bull House
HA-1753
Bel Air, Harford County
Maryland



FAWN GROVE, PA 13
FOREST HILL 1.7
5763 III SW
(JARRETTSVILLE)

32°30"

BALTIMORE 20 MI.
BENSON 0.8 MI.

Holland-Bull House HA-1753

Harford County

Bel Air, MD quad



Holland - Bull House HA-1753

Hartford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

South elevation

1/12



Holland - Bull House HA-1753

Hartford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Nest elevation

2/12



Holland - Bull House HA-1753

Harford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Northeast corner view

3/12



Holland - Bull House HA-1753

Harford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Original section interior

4/12



Holland-Bull House HA-1753

Harford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

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Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPo

General view in ell

5/12



Holland-Bull House HA-1753

Hartford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Main Staircase

6/12



Holland - Bull House HIA-1753

Hartford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Rear staircase

7/12



Holland-Bull House HA-1753

Hartford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Second floor stair landing

8/12



Holland-Bull House HA-1753

Hartford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Detail, second floor door

9/12



Holland-Bell House HA-1753

Hortford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Stone foundation detail

10/12



Holland - Bull House HIA-1753

Hartford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg loc.: Maryland SHPO

Barn, northeast elevation

11/12



Holland-Bull House HA-1753

Hartford County, Maryland

Photographer: Janet Davis

March 1989

Neg. loc.: Maryland SHPO

Barn, west elevation

12/12